

Message Text

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FOR UNDERSECRETARY SISCO AND ATHERTON FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, JO, US, SA

SUBJECT: DRAFT MESSAGE

REF: AMMAN 1223

1. AS PROVIDED REFTTEL, FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS INCLUDE, FOR YOUR AND JIDDA'S CONSIDERATION, OUR SUGGESTION OF WHAT MIGHT COMPRISE A MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY TO FAHD ON JORDAN AIR DEFENSE FUNDING:

2. BEGIN DRAFT TEXT:

"YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS:

IN THE SPIRIT OF OUR PAST FRANK AND CLOSE EXCHANGES ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA OF GREAT MUTUAL INTEREST TO SAUDI ARABIA AND THE UNITED STATES, I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU MY THOUGHTS AND CONCERNS ABOUT SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN JORDAN. AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE WORKED HARD HERE TO OVERCOME THE CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION TO PROVIDING A MISSILE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM TO JORDAN. THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS WE WERE AWARE OF YOUR OWN SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THESE STEPS. WE MADE OUR DECISION TO PERMIT JORDAN TO PURCHASE SUCH A SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES BECAUSE WE AGREED WITH KING HUSSEIN ON THE MILITARY NEED FOR SUCH A SYSTEM AND BECAUSE A MODERATE AND STABLE JORDAN SERVED THE COMMON INTERESTS WHICH WE SHARE WITH SAUDI ARABIA OF MAINTAINING THE PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE IN THE AREA AND PRESERVING STABILITY IN THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH ARE FRIENDLY TO US. HUSSEIN MADE CLEAR TO US HIS DETERMINATION TO ACQUIRE SUCH A SYSTEM, AND AFTER THE RABAT

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SUMMIT CONFERENCE, HIS FEELING THAT HE HAD ARAB SUPPORT FOR SUCH A

SIGNIFICANT STEP. FURTHER HE WAS CATEGORICAL ABOUT NOT ACCEPTING SEVERAL COMPROMISE SYSTEMS FOR LESS THAN THE FULL 14-BATTERY HAWK SYSTEM OFFERED TO HIM BY THE CONGRESS. HUSSEIN HAS RECENTLY DISCUSSED WITH US YOUR COUNTRY'S OFFER TO PROVIDE HIM WITH \$300 MILLION AGAINST THE FULL COSTS OF SUCH A SYSTEM. HE HAS TOLD US FRANKLY HOW MUCH HE APPRECIATE THIS PRESENT GENEROUS GESTURE OF ASSISTANCE BY SAUDI ARABIA AND INDEED ALL PAST AID WHICH SAUDI ARABIA HAS PROVIDED TO HIM. HE HAS ALSO TOLD US FRANKLY THAT THE AMOUNT OF MONEY INVOLVED WILL NOT PERMIT HIM TO GO AHEAD WITH THE U.S. IMPROVED HAWK SYSTEM OF 14 BATTERIES WHICH HE CONSIDERS IS THE MINIMUM WHICH HE

NEEDS. HE HAS ALSO SAID THAT HE FEELS THE ONLY COMPARABLE SYSTEM AVAILABLE TO HIM IS FROM THE SOVIET UNION. HE BELIEVES THAT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE EUROPEAN SYSTEMS ARE LESS CAPABLE THAN THOSE FROM THE US AND IN THE END PROBABLY MORE COSTLY. IN THIS LATTER ASSESSMENT, WE AGREE WITH HIM.

AS WE HAVE DISCUSSED THIS ISSUE WITH HUSSEIN OVER THE PAST YEAR, WE HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY THE DEGREE TO WHICH HE IS DRIVEN BY THE NEED TO PROTECT HIS ARMY AND COUNTRY FROM AIR ATTACK. IN PART THIS STEMS FROM HIS MILITARY LOSS TO THE ISRAELIS IN 1967, IN LARGE MEASURE THROUGH A LACK OF AIR DEFENSE; IN PART IT STEMS FROM HIS OWN EXPERIENCE AS A PILOT AND HIS STUDY OF THE LESSONS OF THE 1973 WAR. WHAT WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT IS THAT NO ONE CAN BE SURE IN HIS PRESENT STATE OF MIND THAT HE WILL NOT EXPLORE A SOVIET ALTERNATIVE OUT OF FRUSTRATION AND CONCERN. THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH A STEP ON HIS PART ARE LARGE AND OF COMMON CONCERN TO US BOTH. JORDAN WOULD INEVITABLY MOVE CLOSER TO SYRIA AND THE SOVIETS. WE CANNOT PRECDICT WITH CERTAINTY, BUT ASSUME THAT OUR OWN PUBLIC AND CONGRESS WOULD BE LED TO A CRITICAL RE-EXAMINATION OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HUSSEIN. HUSSEIN HIMSELF TELLS US THAT HIS MILITARY WOULD BECOME A SERIOUS PROBLEM IF HE DID NOT ACQUIRE AN ADEQUATE AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITY. WE BELIEVE THE SAME RESULTS WOULD PROBABLY TAKE PLACE IF HE BEGAN TO ACQUIRE A SOVIET SYSTEM. WE KNOW YOU SHAR OUR INTEREST IN THESE POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS. WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY WARNED HUSSEIN ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF ACQUIRING A SOVIET SYSTEM AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. WE BELIEVE INCIDENTALLY THAT THE SOVIETS THEMSELVES WOULD MOVE RAPIDLY

TO EXPLOIT SUCH AN OPPROTUNITY IF IT WA OFFERED BY HUSSEIN, AND WE HAVE ALSO WARNED HUSSEIN ABOUT THIS.

WE UNDERSTAND THAT YOU ALSO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANT SECRET

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CSTS OF A US SYSTEM. AS YOU MAY KNOW, OUR INITIAL STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

OF JORDAN AIR DEFENSE LOOKED AT A PARTIAL SYSTEM OF 6 HAWK BATERIES AND SOME VULCAN GUNS AT A COST OF AROUND \$300 MILLION. THIS PARTIAL SYSTEM WAS THEN LATER INCORPORATED IN A LARGER SYSTEM OF 14 BATTERIES OF HAWK TO PROTECT THE MAJOR AREAS IMPORTANT IN THE STRATIGIC AIR DEFENSE OF JORDAN. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THE COSTS FOR THE HARDWARE, MAINTENANCE AND TRAINING INCREASED PROPORTIONATELY TO

OVER \$700 MILLION. THESE ARE ROUGH ESTIMATES OF THE COSTS. IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE TOTAL COST, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE FOR JORDAN TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR SITE CONSTRUCTION (NOT PRESENTLY INCLUDED IN OUR ROUGH ESTIMATES) AND TO REDUCE THE MISSILE MAINTENANCE FACILITIES IN JORDAN WITH AN EYE PERHAPS TO SHARING SOME JOINT FACILITIES IN SAUDI ARABIA IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR OWN ACQUISITION OF AN IMPROVED HAWK SYSTEM. IT IS DIFFICULT NOW TO ESTIMATE THE FULL IMPACT OF SUCH COST CUTTING, BUT WE WOULD BE PLEASED TO HAVE US EXPERTS DISCUSS WITH YOUR OWN MILITARY ADVISORS THESE SUGGESTIONS AND ALSO TO PROVIDE A FULL EXPLANATION OF OUR COST ESTIMATES TO THEM IF YOU SO DESIRE. WE CAN THEN DETAIL FOR YOU COST REDUCTIONS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED IN THE JORDAN PROGRAM AND HOW THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT CAN MONITOR THE CONTRACTING PROCEDURE TO INSURE THAT WE OBTAIN AS WE ARE COMMITTED TO DO, THE BEST POSSIBLE COSTS IN THE JORDAN PROGRAM. IN ANY OF THE ABOVE CIRCUMSTANCES, AN ADEQUATE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM FOR JORDAN WILL EXCEED HUSSEIN'S CURRENT CAPACITY TO PAY. FURTHER, WE UNDERSTAND THAT KING HUSSEIN IS MOST RELUCTANT TO MAKE ANY FURTHER APPROACHES TO SAUDI ARABIA GIVEN HIS PAST EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH YOU AND YOUR PREVIOUS GENEROSITY TO HIM. WE WOULD, HOWEVER, BE VERY INTERESTED IN YOUR OWN ASSESSMENT OF HIS INTENTIONS, GIVEN THE OBVIOUS IMPORTANCE TO YOU, TO US AND TO THE AREA IN GENERAL OF WHAT HE MIGHT DO. A USEFUL OPPORTUNITY MIGHT ARISE IN THE PERIOD (MARCH 18-23) BETWEEN HIS CURRENT FAR EASTERN AND HIS PENDING AMERICAN TRIP. IT WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL TO US TO HAVE YOUR OWN PERSONAL ASSESSMENT AND REACTION TO HIS CURRENT THINKING PRIOR TO HUSSEIN'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON WHICH BEGINS MARCH 29 AND DURING WHICH WE WILL ALSO DISCUSS WITH HUSSEIN AGAIN HIS INTENTIONS REGRADING

THE ACQUISITION OF AN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM.

FINALLY, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE HUSSEIN WITH SOME ADDITIONAL MILITARY CREDITS FOR THE YEARS NEARER THE END OF THE DECADE TO HELP WITH THE AIR DEFENSE EXPENDITURES. THESE AIR DEFENSE EXPENDITURES, AS YOU KNOW, WOULD NORMALLY BE SPREAD OUT OVER THE

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NEXT FOUR OR FIVE YEARS THUS REDUCING THE INITIAL BURDEN. IN THE PAST THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT HAS GENEROUSLY UNDERTAKEN TO REPAY SUCH CREDITS FOR JORDAN OVER A PERIOD OF TEN YEARS. IF SUCH A COMBINATION OF US CREDIT AND SAUDI REPAYMENT IN THE FUTURE COULD HELP TO EASE SOME OF JORDAN'S PROBLEMS, WE WOULD BE PLEASED TO EXPLORE THIS AND OTHER POSSIBILITIES WITH YOU FURTHER. I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR REACTION AND ASSESSMENT OF THIS SITUATION AND TO A CONTINUING EXCHANGE OF IDEAS WITH YOU ON THE ISSUE. END DRAFT TEXT.

3. DEPARTMENT PLEASE REPEAT JIDDA.
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